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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TBILISI 001033

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SUBJECT: GEORGIA: PROTESTS: OBLIGATIONS CHARTER SIGNED -
ALASANIA BACKTRACKING

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN F. TEFFT. REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (C) Summary: Protests were again small on June 3. A group of several hundred protesters gathered at the Supreme Court to watch 16 members of the non-parliamentary opposition sign an "Obligations Charter." The eight page document outlines the GoG's failures, the non-parliamentary opposition's commitment to ten democratic principles, and calls for new presidential and parliamentary elections. The document also calls for the resignation of key ministers and states that all should be subject to prosecution. EU representative Peter Semneby arrived on June 4 and met with the non-parliamentary opposition including Alasania who blamed the lack of dialogue on the GoG. Speaker Bakradze explained to the Ambassador that Alasania postponed a scheduled meeting due to heated internal battles among non-parliamentary opposition leaders. Bakradze indicated that Alasania and Levan Gachechiladze are at odds over leadership of the group. Plans for June 4 are to rally in the city of Rustavi to protest against Maestro TV being off the air. End Summary.

12. (C) Comment: The Obligations Charter itself is a list of general democratic aims and a rehashing of the non-parliamentary opposition's demands. The demand that Saakashvili and others step down to face prosecution is unrealistic and an unhelpful step towards dialogue. Although Alasania did not sign the document himself (he sent a representative), he remains engaged in the struggle for leadership within the non-parliamentary group, reportedly with Nino Burjanadze and Levan Gachechiladze. We will continue to push for dialogue, although as long as Alasania and the other non-parliamentary leaders are working out their internal issues, prospects for meaningful dialogue remain slight. End Comment.

Obligations Charter - Meager Protests

13. (C) The Obligations Charter consists of eight pages detailing the failings of the Saakashvili "regime." The Charter says that "(t)he President should resign immediately. The Interior Minister, Justice Minister, Tbilisi Mayor, Chairman of the Supreme Council, Chairman of the Central Election Commission should also resign and their activities during their presence in office should be subject to the Georgian Public Defender's open investigation." The Charter includes pledges in which the non-parliamentary opposition promises, after coming into power, to secure free and fair elections; an independent judiciary; civil control over law enforcement agencies; transparent governance; inadmissibility of politically-motivated prosecutions; inviolability of private property rights; free economy; restoration of territorial integrity solely through peaceful means." The Charter did not indicate how the group planned to implement these pledges. The non-parliamentary opposition said it would continue protests and civil disobedience until their aims are met. Alasania team member Zurab Abashidze signed the document in his stead. Notably, the Labor Party and

former Prime Minister Noghaideli did not sign the document citing the meaninglessness of signing a document which simply spells out widely accepted democratic principles. Protests continued to be meager as only a couple hundred attended the signing and the meeting in front of Parliament. Gachechiladze announced at the meeting that a caravan would be organized to Rustavi to protest what Gachechiladze called Qbe organized to Rustavi to protest what Gachechiladze called government censorship by taking Maestro TV off the air (septel).

Bakradze In Holding Pattern

¶4. (C) Speaker Bakradze told the Ambassador that he had been in contact with Alasania. Alasania canceled a planned meeting, telling Bakradze that he needed to attend non-parliamentary leadership meetings. Bakradze said that a power struggle between Alasania and Gachechiladze has emerged as to who would lead the non-parliamentary group. Bakradze told the Ambassador that Burjanadze argued that she should be the leader but was shouted down by Gachechiladze. He indicated that he was confused as to what Alasania was attempting to accomplish and added that neither Salome Zourabichvili (Georgia's Way) nor Eka Beselia (United Georgia) were told about the last non-parliamentary meeting.

Semneby Meets Opposition

¶5. (C) After meeting with the Ambassador, EU representative Peter Semneby met with Alasania, Usupashvili, and Zourabichvili on June 4. Alasania stated after the meeting that "(u)nfortunately, in recent days there were no signs coming from the authorities indicating their readiness for

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talks. We reiterated that we are ready for talks and we asked the EU special envoy to actively engage and push this issue during his talks with the authorities. Time is pressing and the more time we waste, the deeper the crisis will become.... we are expecting more active and responsive steps from the authorities." Usupashvili sharply criticized the GoG for not performing its functions, including legislative functions calling it "the opposition's common concern." (Embassy Comment: Usupashvili did not note the reason that legislative functions are not being performed is because of the protests blocking Parliament. End Comment.)
TEFFT